

Minutes - Gwinhurst Civic Association meeting 12/5/13

President Christina Anthony called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm and the board introduced themselves. Current interim board members in addition to Christina Anthony are Carol Thomas and Kris McMahan, Vice Presidents; Dave Paules, Treasurer, and Denise Brush, Secretary.

The December meeting was originally going to be a board meeting only, but it was changed to a general meeting. We voted to change the order of tonight's agenda from the one outlined in the bylaws to the agenda that Christina handed out. We intended to read and approve the minutes from last month but ran out of time.

A sign-in sheet was passed around for residents to provide contact information. Most of the residents present were not here at the November meeting. A few copies of the Crime Report for Gwinhurst (provided by a county police officer who couldn't attend) were also passed around. Christina will post the report on our Facebook page.

John Cartier, our county councilman who lives nearby in Holly Oak, introduced himself. He gave out a flyer with information and contact numbers for county services. He explained that the county provides policing, emergency, sewer maintenance, code enforcement, parks, and libraries; the state is responsible for roads. A resident asked about sinkholes – Mr. Cartier suggested he call his office to have it evaluated for possible help from DNREC. He mentioned that he got us the new sign for Gwinhurst Park recently. Christina asked if it is all right for the Civic Association to put a box with flyers to announce meetings on the park property, and he said yes. Councilman Cartier also reminded the group about the new Claymont Library which just opened, and the Claymont Christmas Parade coming Dec. 7 at 10 am.

David Paules gave the treasurer's report. We have \$12,132.93 in our new PNC Bank account, left from the previous inactive association. We haven't spent any yet except \$57.99 for the 3 double sided signs with ground stakes that Christina bought, which will be placed near main entrances before each meeting. Snow plowing will be the primary expense of the association. Dave said that annual dues of \$25 will be due by the end of January and should be mailed to him at 1903 Lincoln Ave. Checks must be made out to Gwinhurst Civic Association. There will be a newsletter mailed out to all residents soon, which will have all the details. Greenmount residents are included.

Bill Fitch spoke up to explain the unique situation with Clayton Place regarding dues. He is President of Clayton Place Maintenance Corporation (11 houses) which is required (in each resident's deed) to collect an assessment fee every year. This money is used to maintain the stormwater facilities and other common property. Out of this money he will also send the Gwinhurst Civic Association the money for snow removal for these 11 houses, since the only access to Clayton Place is through Gwinhurst. Bill said to send the bill to Clayton Place Maintenance Corporation, 2 Clayton Ave Wilmington DE 19809, and to not send the newsletter to those 11 houses or note specifically in the newsletter that they are covered.

The next topic was snow removal. The board has reviewed 3 proposals and selected D & M Professional Landscaping, LLC (2137 Veale Road, Wilmington, DE 19810). This company was recommended by several Gwinhurst residents, and has been plowing our Northridge neighbors for 15 years. Carol Thomas did a

great deal of work researching snow plowing companies, and recommended this one because they offered an excellent price and do not sub out their work; they drive their three trucks themselves. Dave from D&M Landscaping was at the meeting and provided some additional information: try not to park on the street when it snows, if possible; when shoveling your driveway, leave the last few feet unshoveled until after the plow goes through, so you won't have to do twice.

Several residents spoke up about special situations. North Park Ave has a small five house area that doesn't want to be plowed – Dave says he knows where this is. There was also a discussion of where the plowed snow would end up; some residents would be unable to get out if the snow is piled in particular places. These notes for current and future plowing contractors need to be documented.

We discussed the specific procedure to be used when it snows. D&M will automatically know to plow if it's over 4 inches since the county reimburses us. If it's less than 4 inches but the weather calls for it to stay below freezing for several days, we can call and ask for salting. We may want to designate certain through streets like Delaware Ave to be plowed even with less than 4 inches (or does the county do Delaware Ave because of the bus?). Christina will call everyone on the board to get consensus on whether to plow or not.

Our website is in the process of being designed by Carol's daughter and will probably will go live by the next meeting. The board members have visited it and think it looks good. Purchasing the domain name is \$60 a year which people felt was reasonable. Carol's daughter is going to take some photos of the neighborhood and post them on the site.

The next topic was incorporation. Dave has researched this and reports that technically we don't have to legally incorporate, as we are covered by default as a civic association. To incorporate as a 501 c(4) is \$400 initially, according to the IRS. After that there is an annual franchise fee of \$25 and an "e-postcard." Really we only need to have non-profit status if we want to apply for a grant. Our situation as an older subdivision is slightly different from Clayton Place, which has responsibility for maintaining stormwater and open space. However, Councilman Cartier recommended that we should incorporate at the state level, and possibly look into Directors and Officers Insurance. We decided to do the state level incorporation but not the federal level yet.

Denise spoke briefly about the DeIDOT Open House at Maple Lane Elementary (just prior to the meeting) on the state Safe Routes to School program, and provided handouts. Most changes are very basic maintenance on the school property such as curb repair and improvement, a concrete pad for the bike rack, and a sidewalk bordering the parking lot. The \$125,000 project also includes upgrades to make the speed bump and the crosswalk more visible (such as piano key style stripes), and installation of 20 mph School Zone signs on several of the adjoining streets. DeIDOT is aware that Lincoln and Maple need sidewalks but apparently there is not a big enough right of way to put them in.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 2, 2014. Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month.

- Denise Brush